

STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER ROBERT M. MCDOWELL

Re: Comparative Consideration of 76 Groups of Mutually Exclusive Applications for Permits to Construct New or Modified Noncommercial Educational FM Stations, Memorandum Opinion and Order

I am pleased to support this Order, in which we resolve 76 groups of long-pending mutually exclusive noncommercial educational FM station applications. Now that the courts have resolved the judicial challenges that delayed our implementation of new point system procedures to process competing applications, we have taken the opportunity to provide guidance on our comparative criteria and to determine tentative selectees for the stations. Next, FCC staff will take the steps necessary to complete the licensing process. After that process is completed, we will open a filing window for major change applications for the first time in several years and, for the first time, new NCE FM stations, this fall. Noncommercial stations are crucial to the vitality and diversity of radio. In fact, while listenership for many commercial stations has been declining, more Americans are tuning in to noncommercial educational stations to hear what they cannot find elsewhere. This Order will help NCE stations meet that consumer demand faster, and it will help spur even more competition in the audio market. I look forward to the new licensees providing their varied and innovative services to the public.

I thank the Media Bureau, especially the Audio Division, for the expertise and long hours they dedicated to the immense undertaking that is this Omnibus Order. I thank the Chairman for his leadership and I support this Order.